

REMARKS

Claims 1-13, 15-36, and 40-59 were pending in the application at the time the present preliminary amendment was mailed. Claims 1-6 and 54-59 have been cancelled in the interest of expediting prosecution and without prejudice to pursuing these claims in a continuing application. Claims 9, 12, 28 and 30-32 have been rewritten in independent form to include all the features of the corresponding base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 9, 12, 28 and 30-32 have not been narrowed by this amendment. Claims 13 and 17 have also been rewritten in independent form to include all the features of the corresponding base claims and any intervening claims. In addition, claims 13 and 17 have been amended to clarify certain aspects of the claims. Claims 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 18-27, 29 and 33 have been amended to change the dependencies. New claims 64-69 have been added. New claims 64-69 include aspects of earlier-filed claims and/or other features described in detail in the specification. Accordingly, new claims 64-69 do not add any new matter. In light of the changes outlined above, claims 7-13, 15-36, 40-53 and 64-69 are now pending in the present application.

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone interview on February 24, 2004, to discuss the present application. During the telephone interview, the undersigned attorney and the Examiner discussed portions of pending claims 9, 12, 13, 17, 28 and 59. In addition, the undersigned attorney and the Examiner also discussed a number of references which were cited by the Examiner in related U.S. Patent Application No. 09/880,725. These references include Japanese Patent No. JP410043258A; U.S. Patent No. 5,720,774 to Glucksman; U.S. Patent No. 2,688,070 to Friedlander; and German Patent No. DE3707948.

Applicants respectfully request consideration of the application in view of this preliminary amendment. If the Examiner has any questions concerning this matter that can be handled by telephone, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at (206) 359-6351.

Respectfully submitted,

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